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BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH - ANALYSIS - MAY 28, 1980

1. IRAN: THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

The new Parliament opens today, but it will probably be at least early July before it can debate the hostage issue. In the interval, it will be preoccupied with organizing itself, selecting a new Prime Minister, and determining what to do with the Revolutionary Council and other elements of the revolutionary structure. All of those decisions could be difficult ones.

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Last week the Embassy occupiers appeared to be saying that unless Parliament bowed to their uncompromising views, it would not be following the will of the nation. In an address to Parliament on the eve of its first session, Khomeini sharply contradicted that idea with the comment that "the center of all law and power is the Majlis. It guides all and it should do so."

Two other aspects of the Khomeini speech will also affect the hostage debate:

--By failing to refer to the hostage issue by name, Khomeini demonstrated his belief that it is a low priority issue.

--Insistence on parliamentary "unity" could perpetuate the status quo. Khomeini may refuse to "bless" a parliamentary decision unless there is complete unity, but Parliament may not be able to reach a consensus without a Khomeini signal.

In several press interviews, hardline parliamentarians have indicated that it will take at least a month for the legislature to organize itself. Furthermore, Khomeini is reported to have said that the Prime Minister should be selected after Parliament is formally organized. That could mean further delay if an acceptable candidate is not found.

The announcement that the Revolutionary Council will continue to function until Parliament is organized probably indicates that Ayatollah Beheshti is reluctant to dissolve one of his most important power bases until he feels that he has sufficient control over the new body. In fact, Beheshti may try to extend the life of the Revolutionary Council as a reserve source of power.

The same considerations may have also led the clerics to decide to maintain the revolutionary komitehs. Through influence over the komitehs and other revolutionary bodies, including the courts and Revolutionary Guards, the clerics would be assured of control even if the executive and legislative branches were paralyzed or acted contrary to their wishes.

State Department review completed

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